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10 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Response to NSSM-94

1. Attached is the final draft of the response to NSSM-94, a paper entitled "Diplomatic Initiatives in Indochina" that was prepared (theoretically on a very close-held basis) by a special committee chaired by William Sullivan. Other members were John Holdridge (NSC Staff), Dennis Doolin (ISA), Admiral Epes (representing the JCS), Roger Kirk (Sullivan's State Department amanuensis) and myself. I developed, presented and argued the Agency's views in this exercise in concert with [redacted]

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2. We, the Agency brethren, reviewed several earlier drafts and have had some of our thoughts inserted into the present text. In most cases, our insertions do not track very well with the rest of the paper, which concentrates heavily on the mechanics of structuring a diplomatic initiative and not on the gut substantive issues involved in negotiating an early settlement of the war. We did not fight for further insertions or revisions of the language of the paper because our problems with it are not textual but, instead, fundamental ones of basic concept and approach.

3. To be blunt, we think this is a bad paper in its present form, unlikely to be of any real service to the President. It is bad because oversimplifying slightly (but not much), half of it is useless and irrelevant. The problem is, we do not know which half. To write a good paper, the drafters would have to know whether the President wanted a paper keyed to the major objective of:

- a. Negotiating an early settlement of the war, or
- b. Improving the U. S. Government's political image at home and abroad.

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It is the unanimous opinion of the Agency brethren that in light of North Vietnam's current attitudes and objectives, no scenario can achieve or work reasonably toward both objectives simultaneously. A good and useful paper would have to come to grips with this issue. The balance of the paper should be structured in light of a hypothesis (or instruction) on which objective was paramount, or else the paper should be written in two parts; one keyed to objective a, and the other to objective b.

4. The first paragraph of the paper simply avoids this problem by saying that "ideally" we might take a diplomatic initiative aimed at realization of the "conditions foreseen" in the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements. It says this realization would include total withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces into North Vietnam and would permit the total withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Indochina as well. But this ignores the fact that our adversaries do not look on the Geneva documents as primarily a matter of mutual withdrawal of forces. For them, the key points of the 1954 Geneva Agreements are that Vietnam was recognized as one country and that the questions of political power in South Vietnam and reunification were to be decided by elections in 1956.

5. If we disagree with the Vietnamese Communists' perception on Geneva, and if we believe that our national interests require the maintenance of a separate anti-Communist government in South Vietnam, then we will have to continue to fight and/or heavily support the South Vietnamese in an open ended contest with the Communists. If we want to negotiate an early settlement in order to end the war, we must be prepared to give the Communists a solid share of political power in South Vietnam and to accept all the risks this would entail. These givens in the equation could change if Hanoi were to decide to alter its basic strategy (now involving a heavy ingredient of armed force) or to scale down its objectives, but none of us believe such necessary changes are in current prospect.

6. Because of our insertions, the present paper says some of these things, but it proceeds largely on a different set of assumptions which fail to take these fundamental considerations into account. It says, in fact, that in practical terms we probably will not be able

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to achieve the "Geneva ideal" (posited as mutual withdrawal of forces), and then goes on in an attempt to fit a diplomatic initiative into our present course of Vietnamization and into the broader framework of the Nixon Doctrine. A diplomatic initiative in that context would be nothing more than a public relations gambit. There is nothing for the Communists to negotiate in such a situation, regardless of what schemes we concoct to get Hanoi to the conference table. The only effective lever we have to accomplish this is to hold out the prospect that the Communists will be able to achieve a measure of what they are after in South Vietnam -- i. e., political power. At the present time, this would require, at a minimum, giving them a solid piece of the political action with strong security guarantees for their apparatus and their followers.

7. I expressed the above views forcefully to my colleagues on Sullivan's Committee, but did not formally or institutionally "dissent" from the paper, since I felt that would have been a tactical error for the Agency. The attached paper is scheduled for some type of higher level consideration (probably by a bob-tailed NSC). You will obviously be the one to decide how to play your hand there, but this memorandum reflects the unanimous views of your associates who worked on this paper.

[REDACTED]
George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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Attachment

GAC:jal

Distribution:

Orig. - Addressee w/atts (Returned & filed NSSM 94)

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[REDACTED]

- ✓ 1 - NSSM 94 file w/atts
- 1 - GAC Chrono w/o atts
- 1 - VAS Chrono w/o atts
- 1 - Memos TO and FROM DCI w/o atts

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Remarks:

To 1:

I want you to be the Agency representative on the ad hoc group mentioned in the last paragraph. Whatever backstopping you need should come from DD/P, DD/I, or D/ONE depending on the requirements. I will look to you to be the action officer on this exercise.

To 2: I will contact you for assistance when this gets sorted out. *mt*

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Richard Helms

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